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THE Unexplained

MYSTERIES OF MIND SPACE & TIME

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Aleister Crowley
An alien is born

105



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THE Unexplained

MYSTERIES OF MIND SPACE & TIME

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In next week's issue

Some people are literally shocking; in **Electric people** we describe the curious cases of 'human magnets and spark plugs'. When girls at a small school in Livonia in 1845 began to see their French teacher in two places at the same time, rumours began to fly. We tell the strange story of **Emilie Sagée**. In **UFO psychology** we analyse one case of alleged abduction by aliens and suggest that the drama that unfolds may actually have been shared by most of us – at one particular time in our lives. How does **Dowsing** work? We present the major theories, some mystical and some scientific, for your judgement. In **UFO cover up** we examine the rumours of a crashed saucer in Rendlesham Forest, East Anglia, that proved suspiciously frustrating to the investigators who followed it up.

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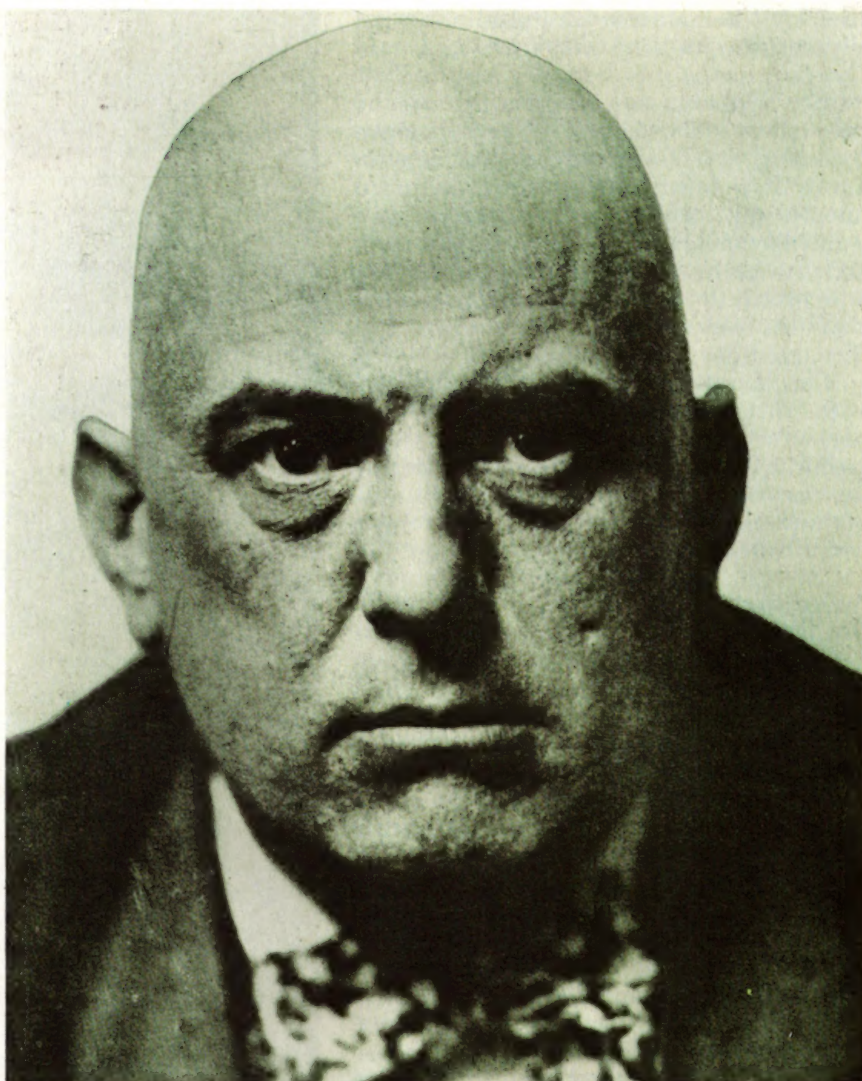
Aleister Crowley, one of the most infamous Englishmen of the 20th century, had many interests: mountaineering, poetry, drugs, pornography – and ‘magick’. FRANCIS KING tells the story of the man who believed he was the ‘Beast’ of the book of Revelation

IN THE LATE 20th century psychical researchers, who tend to call themselves ‘parapsychologists’, largely concern themselves with mental phenomena such as telepathy and precognition. However important the scientific implications of such supposed phenomena there can be no doubt that they are less spectacular than the alleged physical phenomena of mediumship – such things as levitation and materialisations of departed spirits – which were the main focus of psychic investigation during the period 1860 to 1930.

At that time there were many physical mediums, the most notable of them, apart from the great D.D. Home (see page 330), being Eusapia Palladino, an Italian medium whose powers impressed such serious researchers as Everard Feilding and Hereward Carrington.

But one amateur investigator in particular was not at all impressed; after a sitting with Palladino he came to the conclusion that she was no more than a clever illusionist and that all those who had recorded her supernatural feats, notably the extrusion of a phantom ‘ectoplasmic’ limb, had been duped.

The seance in question took place in 1913 and the researcher was trying to answer one



‘The wickedest man in the world’

question that had presented itself to his mind: ‘Feilding and the rest are clever, wary, experienced and critical, but even so, can I be sure that when they describe what occurs they are dependable witnesses?’

Palladino sat at the end of a table, at her back a curtained cabinet containing a stand on which were placed the various objects intended to be manipulated by her ghostly arm. Her right wrist was gripped by Mary d’Este Sturges; her left by the investigator who had arranged the sitting.

The seance began in a way typical of many Palladino sittings – the curtain over the cabinet first bulged and then fell across the medium’s left arm and hand and the investigator’s right hand and arm. By turning his head the researcher could now see into the cabinet where he glimpsed the movements of a shadowy left arm. He reasoned to himself that this could not be the medium’s left arm as he himself was holding it; but as the mysterious arm disappeared

Above: Aleister Crowley in middle age, having perfected his disturbing hypnotic stare. A few – usually unbalanced – women found him irresistible, but most found him repulsive. Even as an undergraduate at Trinity College, Cambridge (right), it was clear that Crowley had mapped out a future for himself that would be pure neither in mind nor in body. As a student, however, he contented himself with writing and printing poetry, including *Snowdrops from a curate’s garden*, *Scented garden* and *White stains*: pornographic juvenilia that is not easily available today



Aleister Crowley

from view he suddenly felt Palladino's wrist slipping into his hand *although he had never been conscious of it ever leaving his grasp.*

This minor but significant incident led the researcher to discount all the reports given by others who had attended Palladino's seances. 'If I,' he argued, '... cannot be relied upon to say whether I am or not holding a woman's wrist, is it not possible that even experts, admittedly excited by the rapidity with which one startling phenomenon succeeds another, may deceive themselves as to the conditions of the control?'

This investigator went on to have sittings with other mediums and to study the findings of other psychical researchers. As a result he became a complete sceptic, deciding that almost all the reported phenomena of the seance room were the outcome of fraud and self-deception.

Enter Aleister Crowley

Yet it is perhaps surprising that this particular investigator came to such negative conclusions. For, far from being a pure materialist, he was himself a dedicated occultist; he was none other than Aleister Crowley, the practising ritual magician who, in the 1920s, was denounced as 'the wickedest man in the world'. His combination of total disbelief in Spiritualist mediumship with total belief in ritual magic was typical of the man; a thread of ambivalence and paradox ran through his life, his teachings, and his relationship with others.

Edward Alexander Crowley – later he abandoned his Christian names in favour of the strangely spelt 'Aleister' – was born in October 1875. His parents were members of the Plymouth Brethren, that most rigid of Protestant sects, and they brought up their



Above: Crowley as family man in 1910. His marriage ('a detestable institution' he called it later) to Rose Kelly, a clergyman's daughter, was apparently perfectly happy until he discovered she was a dipsomaniac. After his divorce he called his mistresses 'Scarlet Women'



Left: Allan Bennett, one of the few men whom Crowley revered, describing his mind as being 'pure, piercing and profound beyond any other'. Bennett taught Crowley magic when they were both members of the Order of the Golden Dawn. But they took different paths: Bennett went to Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) and became a Buddhist monk. Crowley became 'the Beast'

only son in all its rigid beliefs – that every word of the Bible was the literal truth, inspired by the Holy Spirit, that the Catholic and Anglican Churches were 'synagogues of Satan', that the overwhelming majority of mankind was doomed by a just God to roast in hellfire for all eternity.

The elder Crowley died in 1887, and young Aleister became the object of his mother's fanatical venom. On more than one occasion she accused him of being the actual 'Great Beast' of the book of Revelation whose number is said to be 666. To the end of his life Crowley did everything he could to live up to this archetypal image. He may even have come to believe he really was the biblical Beast.

He was sent away to a school run for the sons of Brethren. Here his experiences were such that he lost his Christian faith and acquired a hatred of the Brethren and their beliefs that was to survive throughout his long and eventful life.

In October 1895 Crowley, in possession of a fortune of £30,000 that he had inherited on reaching the age of 21, became a student of



Trinity College, Cambridge. His three years at the university were happy ones; he collected rare books, wrote much poetry, spent his holidays climbing in the Alps – and became interested in the occult.

This led him, in 1898, to become a Neophyte – a student member – of ‘the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn’, a semi-secret society devoted to the study of the ‘occult arts and sciences’, including the evocation of spirits, divination, and even alchemy.

Crowley considered most of his fellow members of the Golden Dawn to be ‘absolute nonentities’ but he was impressed by the occult magical abilities of two of them, Cecil Jones and Allan Bennett. The latter took up residence with Crowley in his London flat, and together the two carried out many occult experiments, among them the ‘consecration’ – the charging with magical powers – of a talisman intended to cure a certain Lady Hall of a serious illness.

This was duly prepared and handed over. Unfortunately, however, neither Lady Hall nor her daughter followed Crowley’s precise instructions. So that when the talisman was

Above: Crowley the magician. Despite some of the more ludicrous poses he affected (right), the core of his ‘magick’ seems to be genuine enough. His famous, and much misunderstood, ‘Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law’ was amplified by ‘Love is the law; love under will’. He constantly urged his followers to seek their true selves, for this, he believed, was the divine purpose of all human lives. Perhaps he had taken the idea from the Elizabethan magician Dr Dee, who had written ‘Do that which most pleaseth you. . . .’ These ‘laws’ referred to profound spiritual truths, but the unenlightened took them to advocate moral laxity; in his less noble moments so did Crowley

applied to ‘the venerable old lady’ she was ‘seized with a violent series of fits and nearly died’.

The consecration that produced these unpleasant effects was probably carried out in what Crowley called the White Temple, a room lined with mirrors and devoted to white magic. But his flat also included another room, the Black Temple, in which the altar was supported by the image of a Negro standing on his hands and which contained a skeleton to which Crowley was silly enough to sacrifice sparrows.

Invisible vandals

There seems to have been a thoroughly sinister atmosphere about Crowley’s flat. One evening in 1899 he and a friend, also an occultist, went out to dinner. On their return they found that the locked door of the White Temple had been mysteriously opened, its furniture overturned and the ‘magical symbols’ that it held scattered around the room. As Crowley and his friend restored the room to order they clairvoyantly observed ‘semi-materialised beings . . . marching around the main room in almost unending procession’.

In 1900 the Golden Dawn split into two competing factions. Crowley managed to quarrel with both of them and for the next three years or so lost interest in Western occultism. Instead he wrote poetry, travelled the world and got married to a lady whom he called ‘Ouarda the Seer’, although she knew little about the occult and probably cared less.

In March 1904 the two were staying in Cairo. Crowley, wanting to demonstrate his occult abilities to his wife, carried out a number of magical rites. The results, if





Crowley's written records are to be believed, were startling. He received a psychic message, flashed into his brain from some unknown source, which told him that a new epoch in history was about to begin. He, Crowley, had been chosen to be the prophet of this new age. Crowley's wife also received a message: her husband was to sit down for one hour on three consecutive days with a pen and paper before him. The gods would then dictate to him, in voices audible only to their chosen prophet, the gospel of the new age that was about to dawn.

Crowley obeyed the directions. He heard a voice, presumably originating in the depths of his own mind, and wrote down the words dictated to him. The result was *The book of the law*, a prose poem, which Crowley came to believe was literally inspired in precisely the same way that his parents had believed the Bible to be inspired.

The meaning of some parts of the *The book of the law* is obscure. Even Crowley admitted that some passages of it were beyond his own comprehension. But the basic message was clear. Crowley was to be the prophet of a new era, 'the Age of Horus'. In the new age all the old religions of mankind – Christianity, Islam, Buddhism – will pass away and be replaced by a new faith of 'Force and Fire', the basic moral principle of which will be complete self-fulfilment. For 'Every man and woman is a star' – in other words, each individual has an absolute right to develop in his or her own way. 'Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law', says the new gospel,

for 'Thou hast no right but to do thy will' and 'The word of sin is restriction'.

In fairness to Crowley and his followers it has to be emphasised that the former was always careful to point out that 'Do what thou wilt' is not quite the same as 'Do what you like'. When *The book of the law* says 'Do what thou wilt', claimed Crowley, it means 'find the way of life that is in accordance with your inmost nature and then live it to the full'.

For some years Crowley only half-believed in the truth and importance of *The book of the law*, but by 1910 it had mastered him, and he devoted the rest of his life to spreading its message and converting others to the belief that he, Aleister Crowley, was a new messiah.

The methods he adopted to achieve these ends included the authorship of numerous books, most of them eventually published at the expense of himself and his friends and followers, the setting up of two occult fraternities, the public performance of occult ceremonies at London's Caxton Hall, and even the establishment of an 'Abbey', situated in a slightly derelict Sicilian farmhouse, the inmates of which devoted themselves to the practices of the new faith.

In the years before the outbreak of the First World War Crowley and a few disciples carried out an intensive propaganda campaign in England. This, although it cost all Crowley's money and much of that belonging to his friends, was notably unsuccessful. Few converts were made and Crowley was subjected to much unfavourable publicity.

In 1914 Crowley took himself and his new faith to the United States where, so he

Left: Leila Waddell, violinist and Crowley's magical assistant in London in 1910, seen here in her robes as 'Sister Cybele'. She played the violin in Crowley's Rites of Eleusis at Caxton Hall, which was open to the public. Crowley claimed to have magically changed her from being 'a fifth-rate fiddler' to a musical genius – but just for the evening

Right: Crowley and 'Scarlet Woman' Leah Hirsig with their baby Poupée outside the infamous Abbey of Thelema in Sicily in 1921. An experiment in communal living for students of 'magick', the Abbey was a disaster from the first, ending in 1923 with the death of one of its members

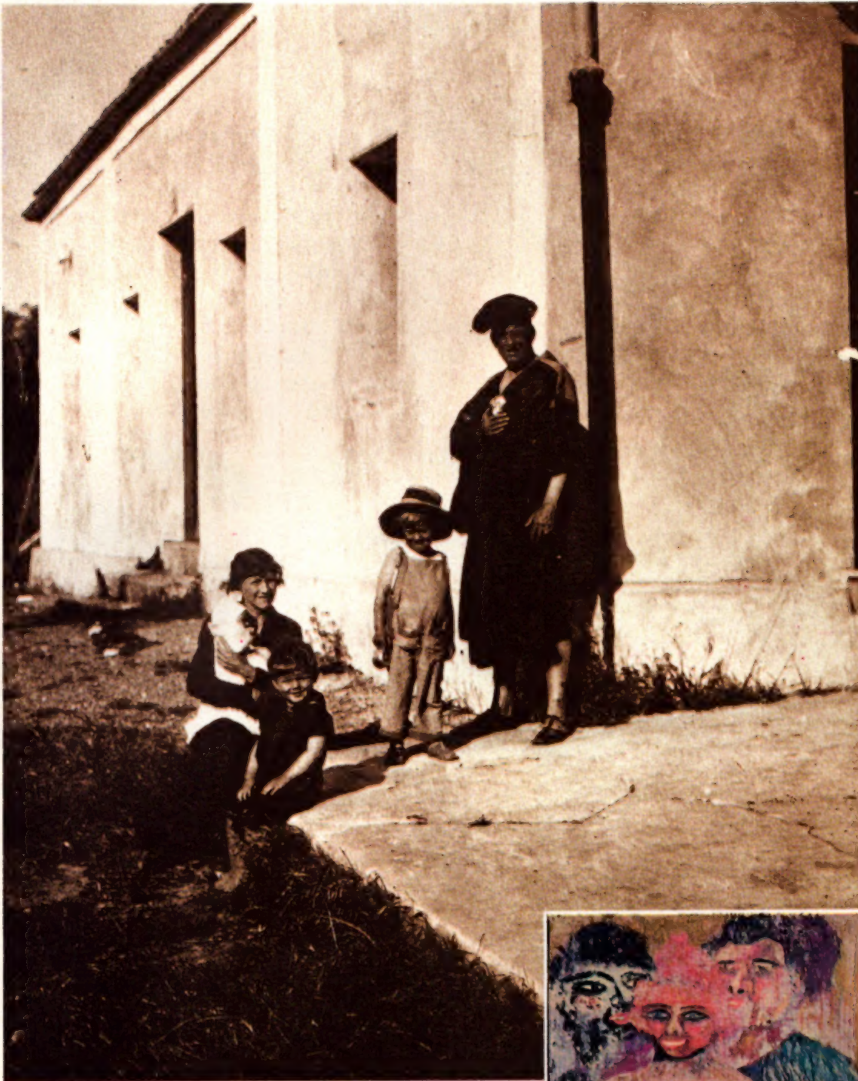
Far right: Jane Wolfe (left), a former stage and screen actress, with Leah Hirsig outside the Abbey in 1921. The Abbey attracted many visitors from all over the world. Some were horrified (especially when Crowley offered them 'cakes of light', which were made of dung) and most went away disappointed



Above: Crowley's sketch of a devouring demon

Right: 'the Devil', from the Tarot pack designed by Crowley and painted by Lady Frieda Harris. The work on the cards was expected to take three months; it took five years





hoped, people would be more receptive to the new gospel and to 'magick', Crowley's occult system derived from his own synthesis of Western occultism, the teachings contained in *The book of the law*, and the tantrism – yogic theory and practice largely concerned with sexuality – that he had learned from Eastern sources.

But the New World proved even more resistant to Crowley than the Old. The six years the self-proclaimed prophet spent in America were unhappy. He was perpetually short of money, made few converts, and was accused of being a traitor to his own country – reasonably enough, for until the United States's entry into the war in 1917 he earned a scanty living by editing a pro-German propaganda sheet.

In 1920 he returned to Europe along with two mistresses – Crowley always maintained a vigorous sexual life – and set up his 'Abbey of Thelema' (a magical word, implying New Aeon, but Crowley often translated it as 'will') in Sicily. For a time this enjoyed a modest success. The Sicilians were surprisingly tolerant of Crowley and his 'magick' and a number of disciples, actual and potential, made their way to the Abbey. These

Above: a pornographic wall painting from the Abbey of Thelema – one of the lesser of its evils, according to the world's press



included Jane Wolfe, a minor Hollywood star, Norman Mudd, a one-eyed professor of mathematics, and Raoul Loveday, a brilliant young Oxford graduate who had decided to devote his life to Crowley's new religion.

Loveday died while at the Abbey, probably of enteritis. His wife, who believed that her husband had been poisoned by some blood he had drunk in the course of an occult ceremony, returned to London and began a virulent newspaper campaign against Crowley. Eventually this campaign, which included the denunciation of Crowley as 'a beast in human form', led to the closure of the Abbey. The Sicilian authorities promptly deported him.

The remainder of Crowley's life was, in many ways, an anti-climax. He wandered through Europe, a lonely and increasingly unhappy man, and eventually died in 1947.

At the time of Crowley's death he had only a handful of followers; today he has many thousands – in some way his teachings seem now more in tune with the times than they were during his lifetime.

What is the truth about the Crowley legend: magician, madman – or both? See page 2126



The aliens within

The startling parallels between abduction reports from all over the world suggest that these experiences are linked in some way. ALVIN LAWSON presents a new and original theory – that they all stem from the trauma of being born, which is common to everyone

OF ALL THE ALIENS reported by witnesses of close encounters of the third kind, by far the commonest are those of the humanoid type (see page 2070). Small, with disproportionately large heads and eyes, spindly-limbed, clad in one-piece, tight-fitting suits, they resemble nothing so much as a human foetus. Is this merely coincidence – or could there be more to it?

Let us analyse the similarities between a typical humanoid from a close encounter report, and an unborn baby. The first striking feature is the diminutive size of humanoids – on average 3 to 5½ feet (90 centimetres to 1.7 metres); the human foetus is, of course, small throughout the gestation period and humanoids' bodies are generally reported to be frail-looking. Humanoid reports tell of creatures with disproportionately large heads and eyes: the foetal head size is disproportionately large from the fourth week onwards; the eye sockets are large, and after the eyes form during the fourth week they grow rapidly until at birth they are half the size of those of an adult – but in a body very much smaller. The bodily features of humanoids are generally reported to be rudimentary, or missing altogether. This is also true of the human foetus until very late in its development. The hands begin to form in the

fifth week, and the feet in the sixth week; both fingers and toes remain webbed until around the eighth week. The underdeveloped ears, nose, mouth and shape of the face mean that the developing baby does not have a recognisably 'human' face until the tenth week – it is, instead, very similar to what we understand as 'humanoid'. Humanoids are in most cases reported as having no evident genitalia; the genitalia of the foetus remain ambiguous or underdeveloped until the twelfth week.

The arms of humanoids are often described as longer than the legs; the arms of the foetus are longer than its legs until the fourth month. Humanoids walk clumsily, as if unaccustomed to such movements; the human foetus does not make perceptible movements until the fifth month. Humanoids' skin is generally either pallid – grey or white – or reddish; foetal skin colour is pallid until the sixth month, and reddish in the seventh. Humanoids have wrinkled skins and hairless bodies; the human foetus has a wrinkled skin in the seventh month, and hair does not appear until the eighth month. Humanoids are often reported as having no eyebrows, and sometimes – when their skin is not wrinkled – it is said to be unnaturally smooth; eyebrows become visible in the unborn baby in the eighth month, and the skin becomes waxy and smooth just before birth, in the eighth and ninth months.

These striking similarities suggest that the unborn child – particularly in the period of the first eight weeks from conception – may be the model for the humanoids reported in many close encounter cases.

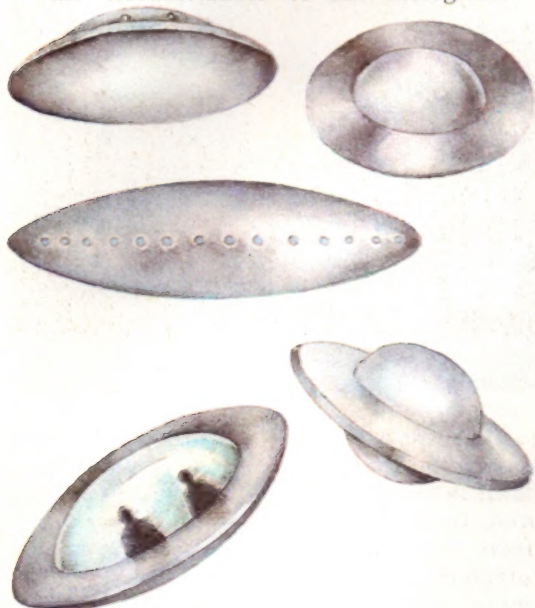
The similarities between humanoids reported in close encounter cases and those



described in a hypnosis experiment in which subjects were asked to describe an *imaginary* close encounter and imagery from LSD-induced 'trips', suggest that our early prenatal experiences may provide a rich store of imagery that can become conscious when somehow triggered.

Psychiatrist Stanislav Grof, who has years of experience in the therapeutic use of LSD, believes that many of his patients relive their own birth trauma during LSD sessions:

In a way that is not quite clear at the present stage of research, the [subjects'] experiences seem to be related to the circumstances of the biological



birth. LSD subjects frequently refer to them quite explicitly as reliving their own birth trauma. [Others] quite regularly show the cluster of physical symptoms . . . that can best be interpreted as a derivative of the biological birth. They also assume postures and move in complex sequences that bear a striking similarity to those of a child during the various stages of delivery.

Grof also describes experiences in which LSD patients seem to 'tune in' to the 'consciousness' of a particular organ or tissue of their own body, and even regress, apparently, into a cellular or subcellular consciousness. Grof says it is 'commonly reported' by such subjects that they even identify with the sperm and ovum at the time of conception, and sometimes describe an accelerated process of foetal development.

One cellular component not mentioned in Grof's data is potentially stunning in its implications for ufology. When the fertilised human ovum is six days old and attaches itself to the wall of the uterus, the distinctly embryonic tissue inside the ovum assumes an intriguing shape: it resembles a flattened, circular plate – the basic UFO pattern – and is known as the *embryonic disc*. This stage of prenatal life is the first in which the fertilised

Left: a 10-week-old human embryo – and an artist's impression of one of the humanoids allegedly seen by Travis Walton during his five-day abduction from Heber, Arizona, USA, on 5 November 1975 (below left). The similarity between human foetuses and humanoids from a wide range of close encounter cases is striking: is this merely coincidence, or is there more to it?



Above: a baby emerges from its mother's womb into the outside world. Alvin Lawson suggests that the travel through tunnels frequently described in abduction reports may represent the baby's passage down the birth canal

Above left: an artist's impression of a number of typical 'flying saucers' from assorted UFO sightings. Six days after conception, the fertilised human egg assumes the form of a flattened, circular shape. Could this be the origin of the familiar form of the flying saucer?

tissues can be thought of as something integral, whole, or individual.

The psychologist Carl Gustav Jung found an analogy between the shapes of 'flying saucers' and 'mandalas', which he defined as archetypal symbols of unity, wholeness, and individuation. If Grof's work is true, it could be interpreted as providing a physiological basis for Jung's theories about archetypal imagery and his related speculations on the collective unconscious. At the very least, it is somewhat startling to realise that every human being who ever lived was – for a few hours – shaped very like a flying saucer. With that in mind one can speculate: perhaps the

embryonic disc does manifest itself as a Jungian mandala or saucer archetype in everyone's sensibility during the embryonic stage; later it could emerge as part of a witness's UFO-related imagery. Thus UFO witnesses might be predisposed to perceive saucer-shaped 'somethings' in the presence of whatever psycho-physical stimulus triggers off the UFO phenomenon – though what the witnesses perceive may be an archetypal echo of their own prenatal experiences.

One of the most difficult problems for ufology is the study of abduction cases. Often seemingly totally unsupported by fact, reports of abduction cases often seem pointless or even ridiculous; but they nevertheless present a coherent body of evidence that deserves to be taken seriously. How do abduction reports fare under an analysis of the subject's own prenatal experiences?

Stanislav Grof presents a useful breakdown of the birth process into four stages, each of which, he believes, has major implications for later personality development and behaviour. Stage one is of primal union with the mother, characterised for the foetus by nothing more than what Grof terms 'good' and 'bad' womb experiences – periods of disturbed or undisturbed life in the womb. Then, with the onset of the birth process,

come contractions within the closed system of the womb – stage two. And next, in stage three, the foetus works together with the mother in its propulsion down the birth canal. And finally there is stage four, separation from the mother – the termination of the foetus's union with its mother and the formation of a new relationship both with her and with the external world: birth itself.

Traces of all these elements may be found in abductee reports. Grof finds that many of his LSD patients relive their 'bad' womb experiences of foetal distress in feelings of sickness, nausea and mild paranoia, which may be traceable to any of several causes such as the mother's physical or emotional health, her ingestion of noxious substances, or attempted abortion. Reliving 'good' womb experiences manifests itself in visions of pre-birth bliss including feelings of cosmic unity, transcendence of space and time, visions of paradise, 'oceanic' emotions, and other parallels with mystical or ecstatic experiences. Abduction reports are full of similar elements – cosmic vistas, feelings of harmony and peaceful self-awareness, intuitive insights into the nature of the Universe; and reports of nausea after the event, discomfort, unpleasant tastes and odours.

Below: a Buddhist painting showing a Buddha inside a mandala surrounded by demons. Alvin Lawson suggests that the mandala may represent the womb – safe and secure within, but surrounded by all kinds of unknown dangers. And the famous psychologist Carl Gustav Jung believed that flying saucers were a form of mandala – a fact that ties in very neatly with Professor Lawson's contention that flying saucers can be regarded as representations of the womb



The onset of the birth process – manifested, for the foetus, in the start of contractions in the wall of the womb – is reflected in visions of being trapped, fixed, chained, or unable to escape an inevitable doom or unrelenting threat, or of 'cosmic engulfment', a gigantic whirlpool sucking the subject and his world relentlessly to its centre. Stage three, the passage through the birth canal, appears as great pressure and pain in the head and other parts of the body, and as a more general distress in which subjects experience sadomasochistic orgies, mutilations and self-mutilations, ritual sacrifices and other bloody events. Witnesses also often report hot flushes alternating with chills, and profuse sweating combined with shivering.

Medical examinations

The final stage, of separation from the mother and confrontation of a new world, is mirrored in the breathing difficulties that many witnesses report, and the severe pain in the umbilical region, often spreading to the pelvic region. There may also be a feeling that the victim's body is being cut open and his heart or other organs removed 'for medical examination'; their eventual replacement brings a sense of rebirth and renewal.

It is easy to see how the immediate surroundings of the unborn foetus become reflected in 'close encounter' reports. Tubes and tunnels are frequent elements of these reports – witnesses are often 'sucked up' a tube, apparently made of light or a luminous material, into the UFO. These may well be memories of the baby's passage down the



birth canal – a theory that was reinforced by a study of eight subjects who had been born by Caesarian section, of whom seven used no tube or tunnel imagery in their accounts of how they boarded or left the UFO. The exception had been treated as a normal birth until her mother had a haemorrhage and a Caesarian operation became necessary – by which time the subject had experienced an hour or two in the birth canal, perhaps long enough to establish the tunnel and tube imagery in her mind.

Above: at around 10 p.m. on 27 October 1974 the Day family, driving towards Aveley in Essex, England, suddenly ran into a mysterious bank of green mist. When hypnotically regressed, John Day described being drawn up a beam of white light into an alien craft. Alvin Lawson sees the light beam, a recurrent motif in close encounter reports, as a representation of the umbilical cord. He also points out that the golden beam traditionally used to represent the impregnation of the Virgin Mary by the Holy Spirit – as in this painting of the annunciation (above left) by Carlo Crivelli (c.1430–c.1495) – may have the same origin

Left: a foetus surrounded by the placenta. Alvin Lawson suggests that the placenta may emerge in abduction accounts as a UFO shape or as the rucksacks often reportedly worn by aliens like this one (right), seen at Vilvorde, Belgium, in December 1973. The helmet may represent the amniotic sac



Images of doors or passageways are nearly as plentiful in abduction reports as tubes. Most witnesses describe unorthodox doors that appear suddenly in walls or on an object's exterior, disappearing without a trace soon afterwards. Such doors tend to open from the centre rather than on pivots, or have sliding panels. Some reports tell of doors that disintegrate or 'explode' just before witnesses pass through them. All these unusual doorways and passages can be interpreted as suggesting another birth trauma event – the opening of the cervix. Supporting this idea is the fact that a control subject, a normal birth, responded to a suggested situation of cervical dilation with the comment, 'It's like a door opening.' Surely the birth process is a more likely explanation of the many doors and tubes or tunnels in close encounter narratives than any attempt to make these descriptions plausible as realistic accounts of the interior design of alien spacecraft?

The placenta may emerge in abduction narratives as a UFO shape and also as the rucksack often allegedly worn by aliens. The umbilical cord suggests the tube leading from the rucksack, and it may also take the form of the retracting light beam. The amniotic sac may have an analogue in the various 'bubbledome' headgear on reported aliens, as well as in the transparent UFOs that feature in many reports of close encounters of the third kind.

Such extraordinary parallels suggest that abductions may indeed be relivings of the birth trauma – an event that has been experienced by all human beings, whatever their race or culture.

How does the birth trauma hypothesis apply to real abduction cases? See page 2118



Humans that have a visible glow excite wonderment and interest – and their strange luminescence cannot be explained. PAUL SIEVEKING examines the phenomenon that seems to be exclusive to the holy and the sick



The human glow worms

A BLUE GLOW EMANATED from the ill woman's breasts as she lay asleep. It happened regularly for several weeks, and each time the luminescence lasted for several seconds. No one could explain it.

The woman was Anna Monaro, an asthma sufferer who lived in Italy. When she started to glow during an attack in 1934, she became a news sensation for a time as the 'luminous woman of Pirano'. The blue light was recorded on film and was also witnessed by many doctors. One psychiatrist said that it was caused by 'electrical and magnetic organisms in the woman's body developed in eminent degree', which did little to clarify the matter. Another doctor speculated that she had an abnormally high level of sulphides in her blood because of her weak condition and also her fasting, inspired by religious zeal. These sulphides, he said, were stimulated into luminescence by a natural process of ultraviolet radiation. Even if this were true, it did not explain why the glow came only from the breasts and only while the woman slept.

Data on glowing humans is found in medical literature, religious writings and folklore. Many toxicology textbooks discuss 'luminous wounds', and in their encyclopedic collection of *Anomalies and curiosities of medicine* (1897), Dr George Gould and Dr Walter Pyle described a case of breast cancer that produced a light from the sore strong enough to illuminate the hands of a watch several feet away. Hereward Carrington, an

Above: a celestial light in the form of a cross and stars were seen to glow around the corpse of Jane Pallister, who died in 1833. Her son and other witnesses attributed this wonder to her virtue and worthiness

Above right: luminescence of the body was involved in Christ's transfiguration and St Paul's conversion (inset)

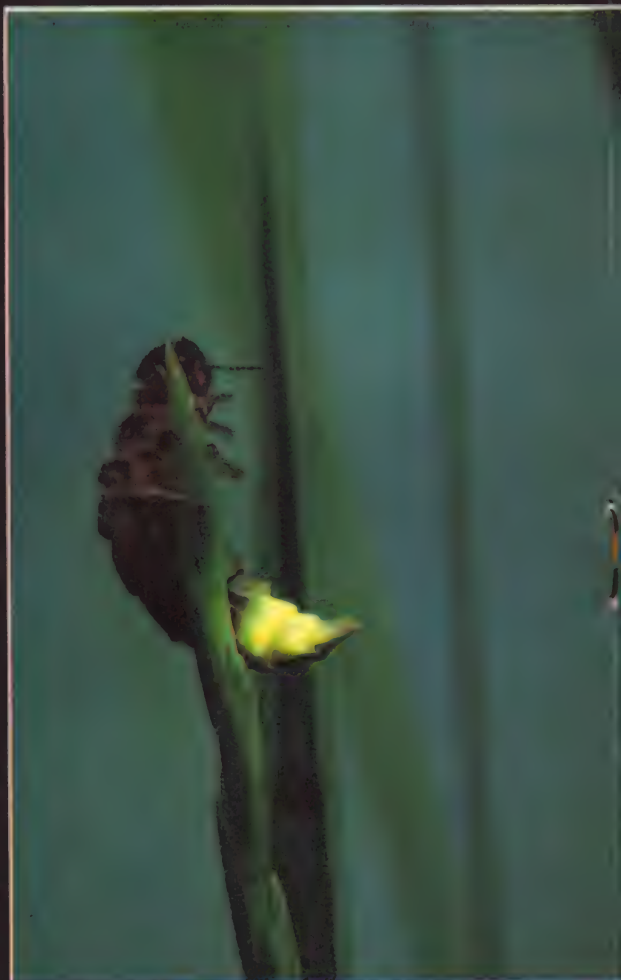
Right: the common European glow worm has a relatively bright light in its tail. Scientists know *how* the glow worm lights up – it is as a result of a chemical reaction – but they do not know *why* some glow worms light up at all

American psychical researcher, tells of a child whose body, after death from acute indigestion, was surrounded by a blue glow.

The only case of a glowing human who was otherwise healthy comes from a letter to the *English Mechanic* of 24 September 1869:

An American lady, on going to bed, found that a light was issuing from the upper side of the fourth toe on her right foot. Rubbing increased the phosphorescent glow and it spread up her foot. Fumes were also given off, making the room disagreeable; and both light and fumes continued when the foot was held in a basin of water. Even washing with soap could not dim the toe. It lasted for three quarters of an hour before fading away, and was witnessed by her husband.

When it comes to luminescent animals, such as the glow worm and firefly, the scientific explanation is that they light up as the result of chemical reactions within the body involving oxygen, luciferase, luciferin and adenosine triphosphate (ATP). But this kind of chemical reaction has not been offered as the reason that humans glow.





Many mystics and occultists maintain that every human being is surrounded by a body of light – or aura – of varying colours, which can be seen through occult training or natural clairvoyance. The strength of this light is said to vary with each individual, but is supposed to be brightest around those whose spiritual nature is most developed, or who are in a state of ecstasy. In everyday speech we talk of faces shining with happiness, and this shining sometimes may be more than mere metaphor.

In Exodus 34 we read that when Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tablets containing God's commandments, 'the skin of his face shone'. This shining frightened everyone, so Moses put a veil over

his face till he had finished speaking with his people. Similar glowings are described in the Bible with regard to St Paul's vision at the time of his conversion, and in the transfiguration of Christ, when his raiment shone so brightly no fuller on earth could whiten it.

Nandor Fodor, the writer on parapsychology, tells us that medieval saints and mystics distinguished four different types of aura: the nimbus, the halo, the aureola and the glory. The nimbus and halo stream from or surround the head, and the aureola emanates from the whole body. The glory is an intensified form of the whole-body glow – a veritable flooding of light. Theosophists speak of five: the health aura, the vital aura, the Karmic aura, the aura of character and the aura of spiritual nature. Different colours indicate emotional state or character. Brilliant red means anger and force; dirty red, passion and sensuality; brown, avarice; rose, affection; yellow, high intellectual activity; purple, spirituality; blue, religious devotion; green, deceit and jealousy or, in a deeper shade, sympathy. The medium Stephan Ossowiecki, in the early 1900s, occasionally saw a kind of dark aura that indicated the approach of unexpected death.

'Natural flames'

We are all familiar with the Christian representation of the halo. Less known is that the original purpose of the crowns and distinctive headdresses worn by kings and priests was to symbolise the halo. Representations of the aureola around the great teachers and the holy are found in virtually every culture: for example, in Peru, Mexico, Egypt, Sri Lanka, India and Japan.

Pope Benedict XIV in his great treatise on beatification and canonisation wrote:

It seems to be a fact that there are natural flames which at times visibly encircle the human head, and also that from a man's whole person fire may on occasion radiate naturally, not, however, like a flame which streams upwards, but rather in the form of sparks which are given off all round; further, that some people become resplendent with a blaze of light, though this is not inherent in themselves, but attaches rather to their clothes, or to the staff or to the spear they are carrying.

Stories are legion in the hagiographical records of priests lighting up dark cells and chapels with the light that emanated from them or, conversely, streamed upon them from some mysterious external source. When the 14th-century Carthusian monk John Tornerius failed to appear in time to celebrate the first mass, the sacristan who went to fetch him found his cell radiant with light. This light seemed to be diffused all round the priest like the midday Sun. In the process of beatification of the holy Franciscan Observant, Blessed Thomas of Cori, witnesses stated that on a dark morning the





Left: the crown of Rudolf II, Holy Roman Emperor from 1576 to 1612. Crowns and other special headdresses worn by kings and priests developed as a symbol of the shining halo

Blessed Bernardino Realini and Father Francisco Suárez.

The process leading to the beatification of Father Bernardino, who died in Lecce in Italy in 1616, was begun in Naples in 1621. Among the witnesses examined was Tobias da Ponte, a gentleman of rank and good standing. He testified that in about 1608 he had gone to consult the Father and noticed a powerful glow that streamed around the door, which was slightly ajar, and through chinks in the boards. Wondering what could have prompted the Father to light a fire at midday in April, he pushed the door a little farther open. He saw the Father kneeling, rapt in ecstasy and elevated about 2 feet (more than half a metre) above the floor. He was so dazed by the spectacle that he sat down for a while and then returned home without making himself known to the priest. Other people bore witness to the extraordinary radiance with which Father Bernardino's countenance was transformed at times. They had not seen him levitate, but some declared that they had seen sparks coming from all over his body like sparks from a fire, and others asserted that the

whole church had been lit up by the radiance that glowed in his face. In what is apparently the earliest account of Blessed Giles of Assisi, we are told that on one occasion in the night time: 'so great a light shone round him that the light of the moon was wholly eclipsed thereby.'

The house of Blessed Aleidis of Scarbeke seemed to be on fire when she was praying within, the brightness coming from her radiant countenance. The cell of St Louis Bertran 'appeared as if the whole room was illuminated with the most powerful lamps'.

Thomas à Kempis says of St Lydwina:

And although she always lay in darkness, and material light was unbearable to her eyes, nevertheless the divine light was very agreeable to her, whereby her cell was often so wondrously flooded by night that to the beholders the cell itself appeared full of material lamps or fires. Nor is it strange if she overflowed even in the body with divine brightness.

Father Herbert Thurston in his highly regarded book, *The physical phenomena of mysticism* (1952), says of these records of saintly luminescence:

Although a great number of these rest upon quite insufficient testimony, there are others which cannot lightly be set aside . . . There can, therefore, be no adequate reason for refusing credence to the report of similar phenomena when they are recorded of those whose eminent holiness and marvellous gifts of grace are universally recognised.

Father Thurston cites two striking cases from the 17th century concerning the



Below: Pope Benedict XIV, who wrote an important treatise on beatification and canonisation in the 18th century. In it he gave attention to the 'fires' that can encircle a human head and body

Right: Stephan Ossowiecki, the Polish clairvoyant who was active in the early 1900s. He occasionally saw a dark aura around people, which indicated the approach of unexpected death





Mohammed (left) appears fully encircled by flames in this 16th-century painting from Turkey; Quetzalcoatl (below), the Aztec god, in his guise as the morning star is surrounded by fire on an ancient stele from Mexico; the great Buddhist teacher Padmasambhava (below right), is haloed in an 18th-century painting from Tibet; the four kings of hell (bottom), on a Chinese hanging scroll, have crowned heads encircled by light

dazzling glow from his face on one or two occasions was such that they could not rightly distinguish his features, but had to turn their eyes away.

Father Francisco Suárez, the subject of Father Thurston's second example, was a Spanish theologian who from 1597 to 1617 taught at the Jesuit College at Coimbra in Portugal. One day at about 2 p.m., an elderly lay-brother, Jerome da Silva, came to tell the Father of the arrival of a visitor. A stick placed across the door indicated that the Father did not wish to be disturbed, but the lay-brother had received instructions to inform the Father at once, so he went in. He found the outer room in darkness, shuttered against the afternoon heat. Suárez's



biographer, Father R. de Scorraile, records da Silva's account of the incident:

I called the Father but he made no answer. As the curtain which shut off his working room was drawn, I saw, through the space between the jambs of the door and the curtain, a very great brightness. I pushed aside the curtain and entered the inner apartment. Then I noticed that the blinding light was coming from the crucifix, so intense that it was like the reflection of the sun from glass windows, and I felt that I could not have remained looking at it without being completely dazzled. This light streamed from the crucifix upon the face and breast of Father Suárez, and in the brightness I saw him in a kneeling position in front of the crucifix, his head uncovered, his hands joined, and his body in the air five palms [about 3 feet or 1 metre] above the floor on a level with the table on which the crucifix stood. On seeing this I withdrew . . . as it were beside myself . . . my hair standing on end. . .

About a quarter of an hour later, Father

Suárez came out and was surprised to see Brother da Silva waiting. The account continues: 'When the Father heard that I had entered the inner room, he seized me by the arm . . . then, clasping his hands and with his eyes full of tears, he implored me to say nothing of what I had seen . . . as long as he lived.'

They shared the same confessor, who suggested that da Silva write his account and seal it with the endorsement that it should not be opened and read until after the death of Father Suárez. That apparently was done. And the account provides us with a particularly compelling story of human luminence – in this case, the glow of holiness.

See page 2106 for the phenomenon of the 'electric people' whose touch is a shock

The sweet smell of success?

Aromatherapy is a relatively new alternative medicine that employs fragrances to relieve illnesses, especially those connected with stress. The method has roots in antiquity – but can odours really heal? FRANCIS KING assesses this unusual form of therapy

EVEN UNBELIEVERS sometimes feel religious stirrings when, for the first time, they witness a Greek or Russian Orthodox celebration of the Easter Eucharist. As they inhale the heady aroma of incense smoke blended with the fumes given off by flickering beeswax tapers, so they sense unfamiliar mystical impulses in their own inmost depths.

Indeed, the sense of smell has perhaps been underestimated in the study of human behaviour – though the power of odours to trigger off memories is a common experience. And a new line of research has shown a relationship between scent, in the form of *pheromones*, and the emotional



Above: the civet cat can produce a musk-like odour, probably used during mating as a sexual attraction. The musk scent is also thought to attract humans sexually, and is therefore used in the manufacture of perfume



Left: the smell of incense, as used in the Church, is meant to turn people's thoughts towards the divine. Aromatherapists say that they have used incense smoke successfully in treating chronic headaches

excesses of mass hysteria (see page 727).

Dion Fortune, an occultist who was also a trained psychotherapist, commented upon the link between smells and the emotions. 'A man attending Mass,' she said, 'will find his mind turning towards the Divine as he savours the sweet smell of incense; if he suddenly gets a breath of musk or patchouli from the woman in the next pew his thoughts will turn in quite a different direction.'

There can be little disagreement with this assertion. Most of us find that smells, pleasant and unpleasant, affect our psychological states. Particular aromas can induce feelings of elation, depression, erotic stimulation, and even fear.

In a social sense

To some extent this link between odours and emotions is 'all in the mind', the product of an association of ideas. For example, it may be only because of the customs of our society that our minds associate the scents women wear with feminine sexuality. If our customs were different and only celibate nuns used perfumes, it is possible that we would associate their smell with chastity.

But the association theory cannot be the whole truth because smells never previously encountered can exert a physical effect on both animals and humans. A kitten will begin to salivate the very first time it encounters the smell of cooking fish, and most of us retched when we first experienced the stench of rotten egg.

Since the 1930s, some practitioners of fringe medicine (see page 1850) have become

sufficiently interested in the psychophysical effects of smells on ill people to revive the ancient art of aromatherapy. Such healers argue that odours can change moods, and that such changes are powerful enough to be harnessed for therapeutic use. The aim of the aromatherapist, then, is deliberately to induce emotional alterations that will help improve a sufferer's mental as well as physical state. The healer decides the exact nature of the desired changes in mood by diagnosing both the particular ill and the individual personality of the patient. On this basis, a perfumed oil considered appropriate for one depressive, for example, will not necessarily be suitable for another depressive.

Often aromatherapy is used in association with other alternative treatments. Chiropractic (see page 1916) and chromotherapy – shining coloured lights on the patient – are fringe healing techniques that are often combined with aromatherapy.

Smells against stress

Aromatherapists do not, of course, believe that scents can cure infectious diseases. They do, however, believe that complaints associated with stress – illnesses in which the relationship between the body and the mind plays an important part, such as asthma and some forms of backache – can first be alleviated and then eliminated by the use of aromatherapy and allied techniques of alternative healing.

The fragrance of fresh flowers is much employed by aromatherapists in their treatment. In one way they are looking back a long way to the use of flowers in ancient Greece and Rome. The Greeks assigned a flower or flowers to each deity in their pantheon and believed that, by inhaling the scent of a plant sacred to a god or goddess, they could share in the attributes of that particular deity. If, for example, they breathed in the scent of the red poppy, one of the plants sacred to Ares, god of war, they would become brave. The Romans shared this belief.

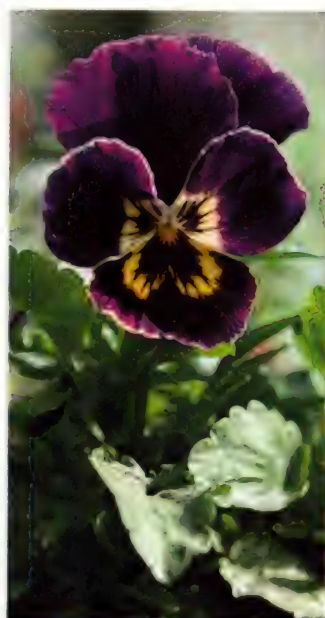
Modern aromatherapists maintain that each flower scent has its own specific effect, good or bad. These attributions are mostly based on the medieval 'doctrine of signatures', which holds that the shape, colour, aroma or other quality of a plant is a sign of its secret qualities. Reading the 'signature' tells the healer what part of the body or what particular disease the plant is good for. The lungwort, liverwort and kidneywort, for instance, are namesakes of the human organs they vaguely resemble in shape, and are therefore said to be efficacious in treating ailments of those organs. In aromatherapy, the violet is considered a 'shy' plant because of the way it hides its flower heads among its leaves. So the scent of violets is believed to bring feelings of calmness and modesty as good effects.

A few of the most common relationships of flower fragrances to emotional states are:

The red poppy (right) was associated with the god Ares (below) in ancient Greece. The Greeks believed that by breathing in the scent of the poppy, a person would become brave like Ares, their god of war



Below: the aroma of the 'shy' violet is used by aromatherapists to bring feelings of calmness



Alternative healing

Chrysanthemum scent inspires mysticism, otherworldliness, and psychic abilities.

The aroma of cornflowers induces sobriety, so being helpful in overcoming a hangover.

The scent of gentian is believed to be a powerful and harmless anti-depressant, an excellent substitute for some of the powerful drugs used in orthodox psychiatric treatment.

The slightly peppery odour of nasturtiums is aphrodisiac – as one writer of old said, ‘good for conjugal love’.

The scent of red roses inspires the 'poetic impulse', while that of verbena arouses a more general artistic creativity.

Fruit as well as flowers have been employed by ancient and modern aromatherapists. The odours of all citrus fruits are considered to have health-giving and psychologically stimulating qualities, as do the more delicate scents of such fruits as ripe apples and pears.

Sometimes the more powerful odours of spices are employed. In the 17th century, for example, it was customary during outbreaks of the plague to sniff a 'pomander' – originally no more than an orange studded with cloves – as an antidote to the 'toxic effluvia' that was believed to permeate the atmosphere.

A preference for perfume

But, while recommending both fresh flowers and fruit to their patients, modern aromatherapists more often make use of perfume and incense. They feel that they can obtain very precise and controlled results with these substances. And to ensure that the products they use are exactly right for the purpose, most aromatherapists compound their own rather than rely on commercial ones. This also ensures that variations can be made to the basic recipes in order to match the

The scented touch

The following case histories (in which names are withheld to assure privacy) give some indication of how aromatherapy can work to relieve illness. Massage with essential oils is a favourite technique of aromatherapists. The massage acts on the body, and the wafted fragrance acts on the mind and the emotions.

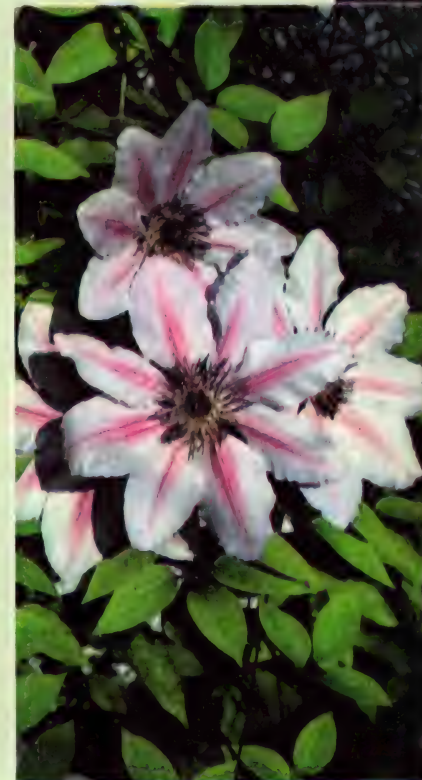
The first case is that of 28-year-old Miss Alpha. When the therapist first met the patient he was immediately conscious of two things. One was the extraordinary rigidity of her bearing and movements, 'like somebody encased in cardboard'; the other was the unhappiness of her face. She was also extremely shy and found it difficult to communicate. It transpired that Miss Alpha had been withdrawn and unhappy since early childhood, and that she was perpetually tense.

The therapist decided to give general body massage with essential oils derived from agrimony, which lessens anxiety, and clematis, which inspires courage. He also massaged the area around the base of the spine, for some therapists believe that there is an important 'psychic centre' associated with this part of the body. After four treatments over a month, the patient was less physically rigid. She also found it easier to talk to people and to face social situations.

Another case concerns Mr Beta, whose symptoms were almost exactly the same as those of Miss Alpha. The therapist tried a similar course of treatment, but after six sessions Mr Beta's health

Right: body massage with fragrant essential oils is a favourite method of treatment in aromatherapy

Below: clematis, whose scent is believed to inspire courage. Its essential oil was used successfully to help an extremely shy person



Left: this advertisement of 1926 links pleasant scent with health, telling the reader that 'A clean and sweet atmosphere is absolutely essential' to hasten the return to good health. It also says that the fragrance will 'produce a feeling of cheerfulness' – the kind of claim that advocates of aromatherapy would second

patient's individual mental and physical characteristics and needs, while taking into account the particular illness being treated. Aromatherapists, like herbalists and other unorthodox practitioners, emphasise that they are 'treating a patient, not a disease'. They maintain that they are concerned with guiding the sick to heal themselves by helping them to bring the mind and body into a natural equilibrium. To put it another way, aromatherapists, while not denying the physical reality of stress-related diseases, emphasise that the psychological state of the sick person is of primary significance in causing such diseases. By changing that state, by restoring the natural flow of psychic energy, it is believed that the patient can be brought back to health.

Few people today would utterly deny the importance of psychological factors in physical illness – even in cases of infection or accident the individual's will to survive plays an important part in his or her recovery. But



showed no improvement at all. The therapist attributed the failure to the patient's age: Mr Beta was approaching retirement.

A third case involves Mr Gamma. This 42-year-old patient had for many years suffered from intermittent back pain, sometimes of great severity. Orthodox doctors had been unable to find any cause for the pain and had given no help. Resort to osteopathy, chiropractic and acupuncture had proved equally unavailing in bringing him any lasting relief.

The aromatherapist decided that there was nothing physically wrong, but that Mr Gamma was too active for his own good; his body produced back pain to force him to slow down.

The therapist also sought to slow him down, administering the essential oil of cornflowers – for staidness – and zinnias – for caution – through massage. After six months Mr Gamma had become less hyperactive, and his pains had diminished in both severity and frequency.

It is difficult to accept the validity of the claims made by aromatherapists. No controlled trials of the techniques have been made, and the 'evidence' that the practitioners themselves provide is purely anecdotal. It will be said, for example, that 'Patient A' had suffered from backache for nine years and had been cured in four months by a combination of spinal manipulation and aromatherapy; or that 'Patient B' was relieved of chronic headaches by acupuncture and incense smoke. Such testimonies are usually of much interest, but from a factual point of view, they are valueless – especially since it is known that spontaneous remission, and even spontaneous disappearance, of sickness, organic or otherwise, is surprisingly frequent. There is no form of fringe medicine, from bee sting therapy to osteopathy, that does not produce a crop of 'unsolicited testimonials' from those who have benefited from it and want to share their experience with others.

Further reading

Robert B. Tisserand, *The art of aromatherapy*, C. W. Daniel 1977

Jean Valnet, *The practice of aromatherapy*, C. W. Daniel 1980

Below: a doctor holds a sponge soaked with vinegar and spices to his face as he treats a plague patient – in a woodcut attributed to Gentile Bellini (c.1430–1516). Many people in the medieval period believed that sweet or pungent scents protected them against the dreaded plague by fighting off the 'effluvia' in the air



Another connection between aroma and the plague has come down to us in the form of the ring-a-ring-a-roses game (depicted here in an illustration by Arthur Rackham): it is a reminder of how people carried posies in their pockets or hands in the hope of keeping away the plague

Some of these testimonials may be the product of self-delusion, but others are probably genuine. There is increasing evidence that if people believe, consciously or unconsciously, that a certain course of action or treatment will benefit their health, that belief actually produces physiological changes in them.

Pleasant treatment

There is no reason, therefore, to discount totally the reports of those who claim to have been successfully treated by aromatherapy – to have been relieved of crippling back pain, for example, by massage with perfumed essential oils. From the point of view of the patient it doesn't matter that the old 'doctrine of signatures', on which the attribution of various odours to different psycho-physical states is based, may be superstitious nonsense. They do not care that there is no scientific proof of the claims made by aromatherapists. It is not important to them that some practitioners of this therapy seem very like charlatans. All that matters to those who were sick is that they have undergone a pleasant and comparatively inexpensive process that has relieved them of a long-standing physical or mental ailment.

Should people who are interested in the unexplained elements of life and consciousness be prepared to experiment with aromatherapy? There seems no reason why not. Indeed it is possible for people to analyse the influence of different perfumes and flower scents for themselves, and to employ those that seem to exert a beneficial psychological effect. As far as more serious illness is concerned, there is also no reason why people should not try aromatherapy – as long as their own doctors have no objection. But the prudent person will always employ any fringe therapy as a supplement to orthodox medicine, never as a substitute for it.

Dowsing at your fingertips

Most people find the very idea of dowsing incredible – yet with a little practice they can learn how to find buried objects or underground water for themselves. TOM GRAVES shows how to make divining rods and gives some practical advice on developing latent dowsing skills

ONE OF THE MOST fascinating aspects of dowsing is that it is surprisingly simple to learn. Most people when they try it should have a fair chance of immediate success. Dowsing is essentially a skill, and you go about learning it in much the same way as any other practical skill. In many ways the hardest part in learning dowsing is in understanding that it is so simple: there is so little to it that it seems people have been forced to invent rules and complications simply for the sake of doing so.

Although dowsing is a highly unconventional skill, the dowser's responses conform to the same pattern as other reflex responses (such as the blink reflex that makes you shut your eyes when something approaches fast): they are better at noticing a contrast than a uniform 'target', so that a dowser will often find it easier to find a hairline crack in a pipe than to recognise that he is standing over a

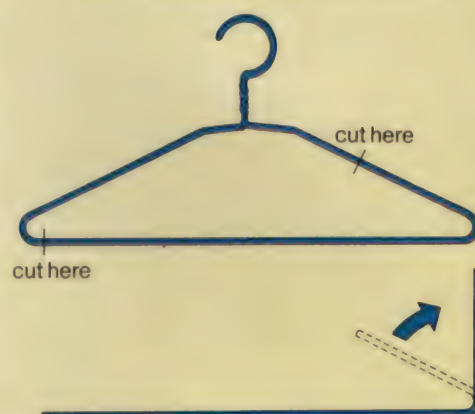
Ruth Lowe, a psychic, uses angle rods to dowse near the Bronze Age stone circle at Rollright in Oxfordshire. Many dowsers claim to be able to find not only minerals, underground water and buried objects, but also ley lines and areas of paranormal significance



huge water reservoir. In most field work dowsers are sensing with nothing more paranormal than electromagnetic and other physical forces; the part that is still unexplained is exactly how the dowser can filter out the minute variations in such a force from the bewildering variety of information to be found.

The skill, in fact, lies in this filtering of information. It is common to all forms of

A natural reaction



Angle rods – types of divining rod that are especially easy to use – can be made from a pair of wire coat hangers (above). In use they are held lightly in the closed fists, so that they are free to rotate. If preferred, they can rest in sleeves made of thin tubing, or dowelling through which a hole has been bored – or even a stack of two or three cotton reels. The neutral position of the rods is pointing straight ahead (1). If you tilt your fists slightly forwards, the rods will take up this position naturally. To become familiar with the behaviour of the rods, practise making them turn by small movements of your fists. This will help you to recognise the 'spontaneous' movements of the rods, apparently not caused by you. (In fact, such movements indicate involuntary reactions of your muscles, too subtle to be perceived.) Turning your hands inwards makes the rods swing together and cross (2), while twisting the fists outwards (3) makes the rods twist outwards. Twisting the fists in the same direction makes the rods swing to one side, while remaining parallel (4). Whenever such a movement occurs during a search, it has its own interpretation, which must be learned by experience.

perception: engineers speak of 'signal-to-noise ratio', computer users speak of 'foreground-background operation', but the most common term is 'the cocktail-party effect' – our ability to follow a conversation in a crowded, noisy room while ignoring all the other voices, or to ignore a clock's ticking until we are reminded of it. We select which items of information are to be meaningful – are to be 'signal' – and which ones will be ignored as 'noise'. We understand how these selection mechanisms work in machines, since we build in the mechanisms ourselves, but we have no idea how the cocktail-party effect in human perception works. Dowsing,



however, is a way of putting it to use.

The traditional hazel twig is quite difficult to use, and in any case is not all that common in the middle of a city, so you'll probably find it easier to use 'angle rods' to start with. These are just two lengths of bent wire – they can be cut from coat hangers.

To use them, hold one rod in each hand, the short arm of each resting in the loosely clenched fist, free to rotate. The long arm of each points straight ahead – it is easier if you tilt them down a little from the horizontal, so that they are parallel to each other, pointing ahead of you. Hold them about body-width apart. You should look as if you're going into a gunfight holding some very thin pistols!

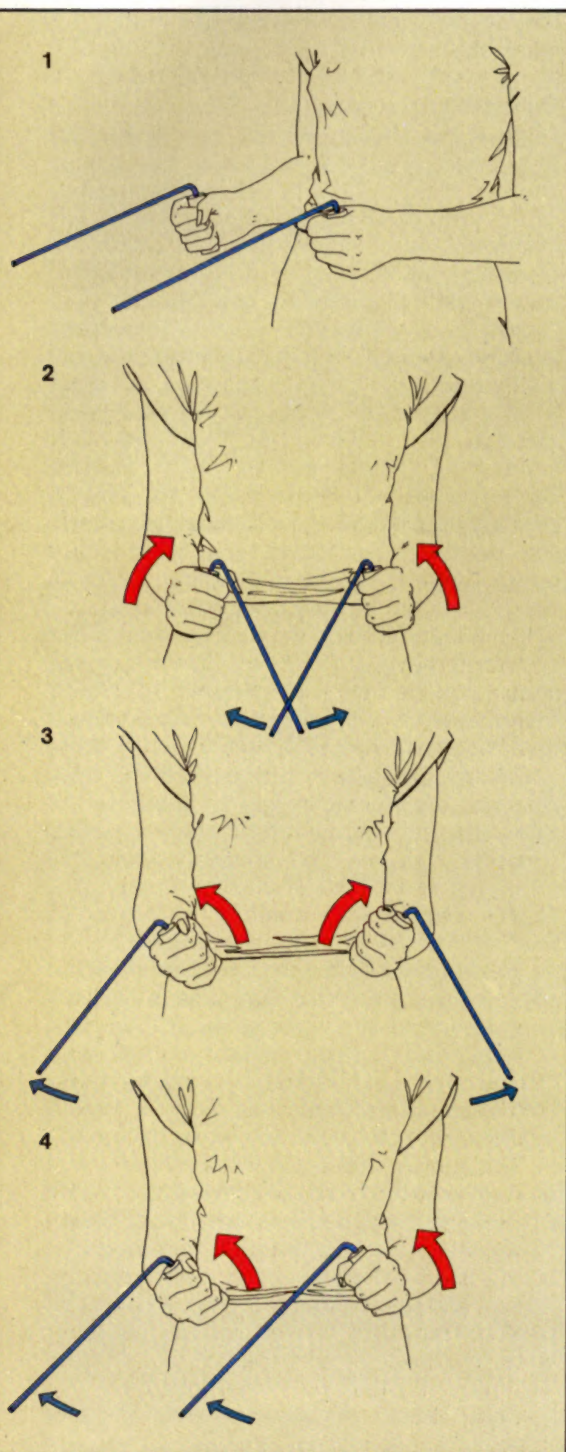
X marks the spot

Using angle rods is rather like learning to ride a bicycle. On a bicycle, you have to begin by thinking about what you are doing. But once you have got the knack of balancing the bicycle, you no longer have to worry about it, and you can concentrate on directing the bicycle where you want to go. The same is true of the rods. In their neutral position – pointing straight ahead – they correspond to the bicycle rolling forward: with a little practice they will stay in that position, regardless of uneven ground, wind or other disturbances. But as with the bicycle, which is useless if it will travel only in straight lines, the rods must be capable of changing their position, to indicate clearly when your body has reacted to whatever it is that you are looking for.

Given that the rods' normal or neutral position is parallel, pointing forward, three significant types of reaction are: the rods cross over, both swing round while remaining parallel, or only one rod moves. The last, for the moment, we will consider to be a mistake. The first response, signalling 'x marks the spot' as you move over the target object, is the most common type of reaction. The parallel movement tends to indicate a direction, such as the line of a pipe or cable. It needs practice to interpret it correctly, and rather more detailed advice than can be given here.

For a while, just wander around, holding the rods, making sure that they can move freely but yet remain balanced. Don't worry about looking for anything in particular at first – just play with using the rods. This is where the knack comes in: you need to be able to recognise when the rods are moving because of something such as wind or rough ground, and when they seem to be moving of their own accord.

The strangest part is that the rods may well seem to have a life of their own; it is perhaps a good idea to remember that they don't: it is your hands that move them. It might feel otherwise, but this effect is similar to that produced in a familiar childhood game: you press outwards hard against a door frame, your palms inwards; when you stop



Angle rods in use by a dowser seeking water in a London garden. The rods have just swung into a crossed position, indicating the probable presence of water at that point – possibly in a domestic water main

Dowsing

pressing, you find your arms move upward of their own accord. The motion is quite involuntary – as are the movements of the dowser that control the divining rod. The latter, however, are imperceptible.

So far you have simply been experimenting, without looking for anything in particular, and any results – such as the rods crossing over – have been ‘noise’, rather like the noise produced by an untuned radio. It is now time to be specific about what you are looking for, in order to learn what should be taken as ‘signal’ rather than ‘noise’.

There seem to be no rules at all in dowsing regarding the method of targeting: almost anything that reminds you of what you are looking for will do, it seems. Some people use a sample of what it is they are looking for – holding the rod against a small bottle of water or a matching piece of cable, for example. Others use coloured discs to symbolise the object, others perhaps a written description of the object, and so on.

All these techniques are, in the end, ways of reinforcing your image of what you are looking for. Without a clear image of that object, it is very difficult to ensure that the angle rods will move in a way that is clearly recognisable. So another knack that is useful in dowsing is the technique of visualisation, of ‘imaging’ some object. For example, hold an imaginary orange in your hand. Even though it is not physically there, make it real in your imagination. Feel its texture. Take an imaginary knife, cut the orange open – feel

A dowser using the traditional hazel twig. Many accounts speak of dowsers and witnesses attempting to hold down the divining rod and finding it impossible to do so when the diviner reached what he was seeking

the knife breaking through the tough peel, smell the tang as the juice reaches the air. Taste it!

Now do the same for a sewer or a gas main, and you will appreciate that dowsing has its unpleasant aspects.

Practise for a while, looking for pipes and cables. (But not both simultaneously.) Remember that the reflex response you are trying to use works best with contrasts rather than with featureless targets and works easiest with something physical to get to grips with; so try it first with running water or with an electric cable that is in use at the time. It is probably better if you look for a target in a location that is unknown to you, in some area where you can check your results – such as a water main at a friend’s house.

Dowsing in depth

Finding something is one thing; finding how deeply buried it is, or how big it is, is another matter. This is where dowsing becomes even more bizarre. To find depth, for example, find the position of the object – a pipe, say – and stand over it. Now start again; only this time look for the depth of the pipe. If you like, while you are walking along, imagine yourself walking downward, actually through the earth to the pipe. At some point you should now have a completely new reaction. The distance out from the point where you started – and which you marked for reference – to where you are now is probably the distance down from your starting point – distance out equals distance down. (This is known in dowsing circles as the Bishop’s Rule, after a French bishop – who, in fact, was not the first to use it.) But sometimes this rule proves ineffective for some people – they find ‘distance out is half distance down’ a better guide – but it should give the general idea.

The two important points here are: first, that you can change as you go along, in the same way that you can retune a radio to select different stations; and secondly, that this gives you some kind of check on your progress – a house water main will never be 50 feet (15 metres) down, for example!

This should also help to illustrate what was said earlier – that dowsing is perhaps best described as a state of mind. You will certainly find that your mental attitude has a critical effect – in both senses of the word – on the dowsing process. The trap is that a negative approach – ‘it can’t work, of course’, or ‘I suppose it will never work for me’ – will usually interfere with or jam up the whole process. But the same is true of an overconfident approach – ‘it must work for me’ – trying too hard and concentrating fiercely, rather than just being receptive. So don’t be pessimistic, don’t try too hard – just let it work by itself.

On page 2114: the theories about dowsing produced by the ‘official explainers’



continued from back cover

Its modern phase began in the autumn of 1979 with psychic messages, allegedly emanating from a spirit called Joanna, through a green, jewel-like stone, said to have been fashioned in Egypt at the time of the Pharaoh Akhenaten, around 1350 BC. This, said the message, was a time of great mental progress among the Egyptians, interrupted – according to the communications – when people started to develop strange physical deformities.

The stone was taken away by one of Akhenaten's followers and, the story goes, found its way to British soil. In 900 BC it became the property of a warrior queen named Gwevaraugh who lived in what is now Staffordshire. By AD 1200 it fell into the custodianship of the Knights Templar, and in the 16th century Mary, Queen of Scots became its owner. The psychic information revealed that the 'Meonia' Stone – so named by the Scots Queen – was lost after the Gunpowder plot of 1605. It was heavily hinted that the stone could be rediscovered today through painstaking research.

Andrew Collins and his colleagues embarked on the hunt, but not before they had completed some initial research, checking out the historical details given by the psychic source. When followed up, they proved to be amazingly accurate, said Collins.

Symbols and synchronicities

Once on the trail of this mystical stone, the clues seemed to come thick and fast. Through various psychic means, an Arthurian chivalric symbol – a sword held above the head in a distinctive, and unusual, defensive posture called the 'St George Parry' – led them to a beauty spot called the Knight's Pool. It was here, in the ancient foundations of a footbridge, that they found a sword or, more accurately, a dirk – which was actually inscribed with the words *Meonia fore Marye* (proof enough that here was a connection with the mysterious stone). And the dirk in turn led them to the discovery of the stone itself: it was buried nearby, in a casket of 16th-century origin.

The tale goes on, however. A rich web of secret fraternities and occult symbolism continues to surround the stone – which, with the dirk, is under lock and key in a carefully guarded and very private place.

The next talk seemed to be something of an anticlimax; a rather casual and soporific dissertation given by Jeff Saward about the Irish Dalriada tribe who conquered Scotland. He also gave a long history of Christianity in Britain, culminating in a

pictorial guide to the ancient crosses on Iona. But the precise significance of their markings remained obscure. However, the Dalriadas brought a coronation stone with them when they stormed their way into Scotland. It lies beneath their throne and is said, according to tradition, to squeak or to scream, depending on the character of the monarch who sits on it.

Complexities at Carnac

The final speaker at the Moot was Robert Dehon, suave in the first suit of the day, who came to relate the progress of the Belgian and French research at Carnac, the famous megalithic site in Brittany. Carnac's average of 23 different types of standing stone to the square kilometre makes Stonehenge look like a garden rockery.

Dehon's team are, he said, planning to use the latest 'solar wind capacitance' technique to date the stones in the area. He also told the story of one of the Carnac menhirs, 25 yards (23 metres) high, which was mentioned as a valuable landmark in the log of at least one 16th-century ship. And in more ways than one it was a monument to the skill of its builders, being, apparently, wider at the top than the bottom.

Like Paul Devereux, Robert Dehon remarked on the piezoelectric nature of quartz (as used in some cigarette lighters to generate a spark – piezoelectric crystals generate high voltage when compressed). He agreed with Devereux that high voltages, generated by the reaction of intense pressure on piezoelectric rocks in surface faults, could be responsible for the 'Earth glow' and balls of light that have been observed (and photographed) before earthquakes. He went further and suggested that the megalith builders might have been investigating the interaction between electric and magnetic fields and the human body (bioelectricity and biomagnetism). Dehon further pointed out that the Carnac region was unusual in many respects: it possessed an abnormally large number of surface faults, and has been proven to be an area of anomalously high magnetic and gravitational fields. Perhaps, he said, this was due to the large body of iron ore beneath the surface. Research into this area continues.

Dehon left the Moot with a thought provoking 'chicken and egg' question: do these ancient stones act as markers for the sites of strange gravitational or magnetic fields, or is it the position of the stones themselves that generates the geological – and magical – nature of the area?

Moot points

Between 10 and 11 July 1982 the village hall at Great Shelford, Cambridgeshire, resounded – probably for the first and last time – to talk of megalithic races, their secrets and standing stones, and unaccountable phenomena, such as odd lights and sounds, associated with them today. It was, as CANDICE TEMPLE reports, an extraordinary meeting called the 'Ley Hunters' Moot', attended by 160 enthusiasts

They listened first to Paul Devereux, the spokesman for the Dragon Project (see page 1521). He began by updating the work of the project, with particular emphasis on the use of 'biosensors', in this instance using brine shrimps to detect natural magnetic fields. These primitive and unassuming creatures have proved a boon to the project since they instantly form clusters – as a kind of reflex action – whenever they are close to natural magnetic fields.

Another development, said Devereux, is the discovery that UFO sightings and geological faults are significantly connected (see page 1609) and that strange lights are frequently reported immediately before earthquakes (a fact independently observed by geologists in earthquake-prone areas, such as Japan and China).

The only real lack of progress in the Dragon Project concerns the psychic connection; the sheer subjectivity of dowsing, for example, has led to professional and personal clashes between the various highly skilled dowsers employed by the project. For example, by following their individual subjective – or intuitive – methods, one respected and professional dowser reported the evidence of eight human burials on a certain site, while his colleague (equally certain) reported 1000. Dowsing, of all paranormal skills, seems particularly open to personal whim and bias, and, as Paul Devereux put it, the dowsers themselves need to be honest about this and 'put their house in order'.

A fantastic story

The next talk of the 'Moot' proved to be the highlight of the day. Andrew Collins, erstwhile reporter for the magazine *Strange Phenomena*, narrated a fantastic, mystical – and apparently verifiable – adventure story, which began in ancient Egypt and culminated in modern Staffordshire, the whole story being interwoven with earth magic, psychic insights and intuitions.

continued overleaf

The standing stones of Carnac in Brittany, France – a source of enduring fascination for the earth mysteries enthusiasts at the 'Moot' in July 1982

